

**VIRAL PSEUDO-CAPSIDS INCLUDING ASSEMBLY AGONISTS  
AND ANTAGONISTS**

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Recombinant hepatitis C virus (HCV) capsid proteins that self-assemble into large spherical virus-like particles structures and viral capsids that include  
5 conformational antigenic epitopes are provided. The large spherical virus-like particles structures and viral capsids, including capsid proteins that are expression products of a viral particle coding sequence protein, may be prepared as vaccines to induce a cellular or humoral  
10 immune response. The self assembling capsid proteins may also be used as elements of diagnostic immunoassay procedures for HCV infection.